From Sir, with love

Mridangam teacher T S Nandakumar is a favourite with students of all ages

A few [illegible]ing bols from th[illegible]ets the roomful of stu[illegible]tarted on their mridangams. 58-year-old V Pillai has been learning for six years and next to him is seated 10-year-old Rajesh who became interested in the instrument at the age of six. They have been learning percussion from their guru Shri T S Nandakumar.

Nandakumar was trained in the Gurukulam tradition in Kerela. "Today the guru-shishya parampara is very difficult to co-exist with the competitive world," says Nandakumar. He believes in making the learning process interesting for his students. Recently he took his students to the temples of Karnataka, where they all performed together. He also takes his students abroad, every time he tours countries. "It is good exposure for them and my sole purpose is to promote my students," says Nandakumar, who teaches in Zurich for a couple of months each year.

His youngest student is three years old and he says that it is the ideal age to begin with an instrument. Sitting in class develops the child's ear for music and that helps in the long run.

T S Nandakumar tea[illegible] Carnatic percussion instruments, including th[illegible] mridangam, ghatam, kan[illegible] moorsing and the konnakkol. He teaches at the Chembur Fine Arts Society, the Shanmukhananda Sangeet Vidyalay and also tutors individually.